

D. Staff and Provider Training

D.1. Citing any data available to the State on the numbers and timeframes of staff trained, discuss the effectiveness of the State's initial and ongoing training for all child welfare staff employed by the agency that includes the basic skills and knowledge required for their positions.

Overview

The Children's Division Staff Training and Development Unit directly provides training to various levels of staff throughout the 115 local offices in the state of Missouri. Staff Training Unit also collaborates in the development and delivery of training programs with many other agencies and disciplines who serve children and families. The initial in-service Basic Orientation Training provided to new front line and contracted agency staff, as well as the training for foster parents, is conducted in a central location. Many of the ongoing in-service and regionally requested trainings are conducted in geographic locations throughout the state to accommodate staff and community partners. Children's Division Staff Training strives to be responsive on a continual basis to meet the needs of staff.

Child Welfare Practice Basic Orientation Training-Initial In-Service

The Child Welfare Practice Basic Orientation Training (CWPT) is a competency based curriculum provided to new Children's Services Workers as well as contracted agency staff that provide case management services to families served by the Children's Division. The training is based on agency policy and includes social work knowledge and skills needed to implement policy and best practice. All new staff are required to attend the training.

This initial in-service training takes place during the first 3 months of employment and includes 129 hours of classroom training. The training is structured so that staff attend a one week classroom session followed by approximately one week of on-the-job training in the field office. The classes are structured sequentially which means the content from each class builds upon the previous session.

The training is provided 6 times per year with up to three sessions occurring simultaneously to accommodate newly hired staff. The classes average 20 staff per session to provide the optimal training and learning conditions. It combines classroom teaching by Children's Division staff trainers with suggested on-the-job training that is under the direction of the first level supervisor. In FY 2003 a total of approximately 360 new employees and contractors attended CWPT classes.

There are five classes in the curriculum:

- **Class One -Family Centered Philosophy and Skills Training-32 hours**
Participants are introduced to the agency role in responding to child abuse and neglect reports, the laws that govern practice, the principles of family-centered, strengths based practice, and the basics of assessing a family's strengths through the use of assessment tools.

- **Class Two-Child Abuse and Neglect Investigations/Family Assessments and Application of the Family Centered Philosophy and Skills to working with Intact Families-32 hours**

Participants focus upon the identification of child abuse and neglect, the types of abuse and neglect, screening of reports and referrals, the process of initiating and conducting investigations and family assessments, safety and risk assessment, treatment planning, as well as the process for providing ongoing services to intact families.

- **Class Three-Expedited Permanency and Out of Home Care and Application of the Family Centered Philosophy and Skills to Out of Home Care-32 hours**

Participants receive an introduction to the impact of out of home placement on children and families, placement standards/policy/procedures, the guidelines of ASFA, how to plan for and expedite permanency, reasonable efforts, visitation issues, concurrent planning, and facilitating family support team meetings. Trainees also practice providing court testimony under direct examination and cross examination.

- **Class Four-Reinforcement and Evaluation-16 hours**

Participants practice skills learned in the previous CWPT classes utilizing role play. Trainees follow a simulated family through the process from intake, responding to a hotline report, assessment and treatment services, the out of home care process, and then reunification and termination of services. During the session, trainers provide direct verbal feedback to trainees. Upon completion of the skills practice and role play session, trainers provide written evaluation and feedback to the supervisor of each trainee.

- **Children's Services Systems Training-17 hours**

This computer class offers participants hands-on individual experience in entering, inquiring, and updating information in the Children's Services' data system. This session is provided between classes three and four.

On-The-Job Training

On-the Job Training (OJT) is an important component within the curriculum to ensure the transfer of learning takes place at the local level. OJT is structured to occur before, during, and after the classroom sessions. Prior to the first class, supervisors and the new Children's Service Workers receive OJT handbooks that suggest a variety of skill building experiences. Currently, the OJT is more formalized in some circuits and less structured in others. Circuits can tailor their OJT to meet their specific needs. The OJT training assists employee development and is a shared task between the supervisor and employee. The front line supervisor also has a major impact in helping the new worker use classroom material and applying it to the work in the field. Reduced caseloads are recommended during the entire training period. However, due to current staff shortages across the state, staff in some circuits begin receiving cases prior to the completion of training.

Enrollment and Attendance

The personnel unit provides Staff Training Unit with a list of all newly hired staff. The staff are then scheduled into the next available training session. Depending upon the hire date, some staff

may report directly to the training for their first day of employment. Others may be in the field office 3-4 weeks prior to beginning their first training session.

Contracted agencies that provide case management services for the Children's Division must also attend the training and follow the same enrollment and attendance procedures. However, the contracted providers who are required to attend the training coordinate their enrollment through area liaisons of the Children's Division.

Annual Training Calendar

An annual training calendar is distributed at the beginning of each fiscal year to all counties and contract agencies statewide so that staff and management can plan accordingly. The calendar contains all regularly scheduled training sessions such as CWP Basic Orientation, Domestic Violence, and STARS/ Spaulding Train the Trainer courses. Other training courses that are developed and provided throughout the year are announced via a statewide memo and followed by a detailed memo to each participant. The calendar also provides pertinent information regarding the composition of the Staff Training Unit, management of specific training courses, and general procedures for enrollment, attendance, and tracking.

Jackson County Staff Training

The Consent Decree in Jackson County mandates specific training requirements for staff that fall under the umbrella of its monitoring methodology. These staff are those who carry cases or who work with cases of class members (those who are in the legal custody of the division). Training is open to all staff, but required by those specified in the Consent Decree. The specific requirements are as follows:

- 105 hours of BASIC orientation for new Children's Division worker
 - 8 hours specifically pertaining to Adoption issues
 - 8 hours specifically pertaining to Placement issues
- 105 hours of BOSS (Supervisor Orientation Training) for all new supervisors
- 30 hours of In-Service Training each year for staff (Children's Service Worker, Supervisors and Management Staff) who have reached their 2nd or greater anniversary with the division
 - 8 hours specifically focused on Adoption issues
 - 8 hours specifically focused on Placement issues
- 8 hours of in-service each year for clerical staff
- 8 hours of pre-service for paraprofessional staff
- 8 hours of in-service each year for paraprofessional staff
- A non-specified amount of in-service training each year for staff who license foster homes.

The orientation training curriculum was developed by the Children's Division Staff Training and Development Unit and used throughout the state. The in-service training is completed in Jackson County by guest trainers or the Jackson County based Training Unit staff. As stated, eight hours must focus on adoption issues and eight hours must focus on placement issues. Additional in-service training topics are determined from the result of a needs assessment, completed each year, or issues of concern found from the various reviews completed in Jackson County.

Examples of the training available to staff are Medical Aspects, which is an on-going curriculum developed in conjunction with staff from Children's Mercy Hospital in Kansas City. The curriculum covers issues such as childhood diseases, failure to thrive, skin injuries, and head/skeletal injuries. Each training session is four hours in length. Additional training opportunities include stress management, conflict resolution, time management, poverty simulation training, sexual harassment, educational interventions, and the Franklin Covey 7 Habits of Highly Effective People. Staff also have an opportunity to participate in computer training as well as other training opportunities as they arise.

Ongoing In-Service Training for Children's Division Staff

In addition to the required initial in-service for new staff, ongoing in-service training is provided based on identified needs and/or policy changes. Currently, there are several in-service trainings provided by Children's Services Staff Training on a regular basis each year. However, since many of the trainings are based on changes in agency policy, there is not a structured ongoing in-service core curriculum offered at this time. Staff can also attend local workshops, seminars or trainings, provided by others educators or trainers, external to Staff Training and Development, however these must be job related and provide new skill development and/or skill and knowledge enhancement to be counted as hours of in-service training. The Training Attendance Record (TARS) with supporting documentation of subject matter are submitted to Staff Training for approval and entry into the Training Tracking System.

There are plans currently in progress to develop a competency based, two year curriculum structure for staff which will include both initial in-service and more advanced ongoing in-service core curricula.

- **Chapter 210 CA/N Training**--Front line staff who conduct Child Abuse/ Neglect Hotline referrals are required per state statute, Chapter 210.RSMo. to obtain 20 hours of ongoing in-service related training per year. Children's Division Staff Training and Development provides new training each year for CA/N staff based upon identified need. Although Staff Training may provide all or a portion of the annual requirement, field staff may also attend other trainings or workshops such as the State or regional Child Abuse/Neglect conference, or the State Technical Assistance Team Training (STAT) to complete the required hours. Community trainings provided by other disciplines such as local law enforcement, Health Department, Child Advocacy Centers and other local agencies may also count towards the training requirement. During SFY-03, Structured Decision Making Training was provided to over 950 Child Abuse/Neglect staff statewide which counted towards the annual Chapter 210 requirement and also served to assist in the implementation of new policy and practice.
- **Domestic Violence Training**--Each year, the Children's Division, and the Family Support Division, in collaboration with the Missouri Coalition Against Domestic Violence provide quarterly cross- training to staff who work with families impacted by domestic violence. During SFY-03, a total of 113 staff were trained.

- **Office of State Courts Administrator/Children's Division Multi-Disciplinary Training**--This in-service training is provided regularly each year for juvenile court staff, regarding response to Child Abuse/Neglect, roles and responsibilities, assessing and reporting.

In addition to the regularly scheduled in-service trainings noted above, the following were provided during FY 2002-2003:

- **Bench Card Regional Multi-disciplinary Training**--In May and June, 2003, the Children's Division and the Family Court Committee, in collaboration with the Juvenile Court Improvement Project, conducted regional, multi-disciplinary workshops which assisted Juvenile and Family Court and other key stakeholders in the utilization and implementation of the Best Practices Recommendations Resource Guide. The workshop was a requirement for all judges and family court commissioners who hear Juvenile Court Child Abuse and Neglect cases. In addition, the training was provided to juvenile officers who handle these cases, Juvenile Court attorneys, GALS, CASA volunteers and Children's Division workers, supervisors and training staff. The Supreme Court Family Court Committee completed the second installment of the Missouri Resource Guide for "Best Practices in Child Abuse and Neglect Cases". This installment, which was provided to participants at the training, included information about the dispositional review hearing, permanency hearing, and post-permanency hearing. It also provided information related to ASFA, the Indian Child Welfare Act, ICPC, and MEPA. A total of approximately 400 Children's Division staff and 600 court participants attended the training.
- **Cross Training for Residential Care Treatment Providers**--Staff Training and Development assisted in the production of a video and training material that will be used in the cross-training of residential treatment providers. The training content included information about the child abuse and neglect statutes in Missouri, when and how to report suspected abuse/ neglect, and the process for investigation in a residential setting.
- **Interstate Compact Placement of Children Training**--The Children's Division Staff Training and Development Unit provided training on ICPC procedures to over 90 staff.
- **Structured Decision Making Training**--In collaboration with the Children's Research Center (CRC) and with input from field staff throughout the state, the Children's Division developed procedures to implement the Structured Decision Making model. During September 2002-May 2003, Staff Training and the Child Abuse/Neglect Policy Unit provided statewide training on Structured Decision Making to over 950 front line field staff. Staff were provided a demonstration and skills practice using the tools which included the CA/N Screen In Criteria, Response Priority, Track Assignment, Safety and Risk Assessment tools and a new Investigation/Assessment summary tool. Child Welfare Practice Initial In-Service Training was also updated to reflect the new Structured Decision Making (SDM) content and will continue to be provided to new staff.

Ongoing In-Service Training Development

In addition to the in-service training listed above, the following are in the process of being developed and implemented:

- Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline Unit Call Response/Protocol Training
- Police Chiefs' Association/Children's Division Training for Division staff, law enforcement and Juvenile Court staff
- Peaceful Intervention/De-escalation Training for Division staff and foster parents
- Families Impacted By Drugs Training for Division staff and Intensive In-home Services staff

Assessment of Training Needs

Training needs are assessed regularly in several different ways. General trends and needs are identified through processes such as Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI), the Peer Record Review (PRR), the annual Survey of Organizational Excellence (SOE), and the Practice Development Reviews (PDR). Specific trainings are developed based on field staff needs, ideas and suggestions, while other trainings are developed as a result of new agency policy implementation. This is usually done through a statewide training effort in which all Children's Division staff are trained directly by Children's Division Staff Trainers, or through a Train the Trainer process. Although there is frequent communication between training, policy and field staff, the formation of a training advisory committee is being explored so that annual training needs can be addressed in a more consistent, structured manner across the state. In addition, the creation of an individual development plan is being explored so that staff and their supervisor will have a process to assist in identifying specific professional development needs of the employee.

Evaluation and Effectiveness of Training

The effectiveness of the State's initial training is measured by written evaluations per class, informal feedback from field staff, and practice activities whereby trainees demonstrate their knowledge and skills. In CWP Basic Orientation for example, the fourth class is dedicated to several days of role play activity and skill demonstration where trainee performance is assessed. The effectiveness of Children's Division training was also externally evaluated by the Council on Accreditation (COA) during site visits in 2001. The initial in-service CWP Basic Orientation Training for new staff was assessed and was considered to meet COA standards. However, an identified need was specialized ongoing in-service training for staff.

After each class of initial Child Welfare Practice Basic Orientation Training, participants are encouraged to complete a written evaluation of the training. This evaluation is composed of many open-ended questions asking for the participant's opinion on the content and usefulness of the training. Five questions are asked using a Likert-type scale to record their reactions. Of those five questions, 3 were selected which come the closest to evaluating the training's effectiveness. These were: 1) The subject matter was adequately covered; 2) The content was suitable for background and experience of the participant; and 3) The handouts were relevant to the work to be completed.

On a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree) participant's rank each question for each training they attend. As there were 3 questions being considered, a total score of 12 (3 X 4) would be assigned if the participant scored all 3 questions as a 4. Thus, 12 would be the highest score possible and 3 the lowest. As the lowest score that could be given if the participant agreed with all 3 questions would be 9, a score of 8 or less was used to indicate a participant did not consider the training class effective.

The initial training for Children's Division staff consists of 5 classes. However, for purposes of this data collection and review, the *computers systems training class* was not included. During SFY-03, 8 sessions of CWP training were conducted.

		Class One	Class Two	Class Three	Class Four
SFY-01	# Attended	77	81	61*	60*
	# Evaluations	67	69	54	58
	# Effective	61	63	46	52
	% Effective	91.0	91.3	85.1	89.6
SFY-02	# Attended	42	49	32*	31*
	# Evaluations	39	47	29	30
	# Effective	36	44	22	28
	% Effective	92.3	93.6	75.8	93.3
SFY-03	# Attended	213	214	175	193*
	# Evaluations	207	206	166	171
	# Effective	193	196	150	160
	% Effective	93.2	95.1	90.3	94.1

*Does not include Jackson County data. Jackson County staff are trained locally for Classes Three and Four of the CWP

Basic Orientation Training.

For Class One 93% reported the class was effective. For Class Two, 95% reported the class was effective. Class Three had 90% reporting the class was effective. Class Four had 94% reporting the class was effective.

As a comparison, 2 random sessions for each of the two previous fiscal years were examined. Comparatively, during SFY-01, for Class One, 91% rated the class effective. Class two as rated effective 91% of the time. Class Three reported an 85% effectiveness rate and Class Four 90%. During SFY-02, Class One had 92% reporting the class was effective, Class Two had 94%, Class Three 76% and Class Four 93%.

Curriculum Oversight

Screening Teams for CWP Training

Since CWP Training for new staff is based in agency policy, there was a recognized need to develop an ongoing process to ensure all new policies and procedures were integrated into the curriculum in a timely manner. Therefore, screening teams were developed within the Staff Training Unit to review new draft policy and determine how best to integrate the policy into the curriculum for new staff. There are currently four teams of two trainers who are assigned and

each team is responsible for a specific content area within the curriculum. The training staff and policy units work closely together to ensure all program areas are addressed.

Policy Review Teams

In addition to the screening teams for curriculum, there is also a policy review team made up of representatives from field staff, program development specialists and training staff. This team reviews draft policy and makes suggestions prior to policy implementation. The screening teams for CWP Training also consider this information when revising the training curriculum.

CWP Redesign-Development of Two Year Curriculum Structure

New Children's Services workers need additional training beyond the current initial in-service training in order to be able to assume more readily their job responsibilities. The design of a structured 2-year curriculum for new staff is being developed. This two-year curriculum will incorporate initial in-service training for newly hired staff and will also provide advanced in-service skill development for the CS worker and supervisor within their first two years of employment.

Specialized Investigation/Assessment Advanced In-Service Training

As part of the development of a two-year curriculum provided to front-line staff and supervisors, in 2002 the training unit began developing competency based, specialized investigation and assessment training. This was in conjunction with policy staff, front line workers and supervisory staff. Following the initial in-service CWP Basic Orientation sessions which occur during the first three months, this advanced ongoing in-service module will occur during the 6-12 month period. This module is the first in the development of several specialized modules that will be provided to front line staff, depending on their job duties i.e.; investigation/assessment, Family-Centered Services with intact families, or Family Centered Out of Home Care. This specialized training will initially be piloted in two areas of the State. Trainers have been assigned to serve as liaisons in specified geographic locations to assist in the development and delivery of the training and jointly assess additional training needs with field staff. This effort will continue through SFY-04 with plans to implement on a statewide level.

Supervisor Training and Curriculum Development

Due to budget constraints, the statewide initial in-service training for new supervisors, Basic Orientation Supervisory Skills (BOSS) has been on hold with the exception of Jackson County where it continues to be provided on a regular basis per the consent decree requirements. Staff Training was also able to provide one session of BOSS for the St. Louis Metro Area this past year for front line supervisors. There have been several other special requested supervisory trainings to meet regional needs. During SFY03, Staff Training, in conjunction with local field staff, developed and provided supervisory training which focused on action planning, specialized program areas, personnel issues such as how to deal with conduct, discipline, performance, and time management.

Although BOSS Training has provided a general framework for supervisors, it was originally developed to meet the needs of not only Children's Division staff, but also Family Support Division (income maintenance) staff as well as clerical staff. It is recognized that supervisors who deal with Child Welfare need a model of supervision that provides both a clinical and

administrative focus. Therefore, several initiatives are currently underway to meet the needs of Children's Division supervisors.

- **Clinical Skills for Supervisors Role Demonstration Model-University of Missouri-Columbia and DFS**

As the recipients of a 3 year grant through the Southern Regional Quality Improvement Center for Child Protection, the University of Missouri-Columbia is working in collaboration with Children's Division and Prevent Child Abuse Missouri to develop and provide intensive clinical training and individual mentoring to 30 first line Supervisors in two sites, one rural (Southeast Missouri) and one metropolitan (St. Louis County). The approach designed to be tested focuses on a supervisor-as-teacher system in which actual and simulated demonstration of desired techniques and skills is stressed. Supervisors model case intervention behaviors and workers learn by observation, discussion and analysis of observed practice. Matched comparison sites have been selected and turnover, employee satisfaction, clinical performance, client outcomes and organizational climate will be regularly measured and compared using both standardized instruments and case audit techniques. The first and second modules of training were conducted between June and September 2003 with additional modules of training scheduled for SFY-04 and SFY-05.

- **Two Year Supervisor Curriculum for Front Line Supervisory Staff**

In addition to the three year grant project, the Staff Training and Development Unit with assistance from the Child Welfare Practice Group, is developing a comprehensive skills based training curriculum that will be provided statewide to front line supervisors during their first two years as a new supervisor. The training structure will provide both the initial in-service and the advanced ongoing in-service modules. Curriculum development will focus on Leadership, the parallel process of being strengths based and solution focused, decision making, conflict resolution, case consultation, worker development and performance, ethical and liability issues, administrative duties, teamwork and teambuilding, conducting meetings, crisis intervention, community collaboration, boundary issues, mediation, facilitating change.

- **Child Welfare League of America Curriculum**

As the recipient of a grant through the Children's Justice Act in SFY-03, Children's Division staff trainers attended a train the trainer and received curriculum developed by the Child Welfare League of America on Effective Supervisory Practice. This curriculum will also be used in the development of the above mentioned statewide Children's Division supervisory training.

NOTE All three supervisor training initiatives above will be utilized as part of the overall development of a statewide supervisor training program structure for CS front line supervisory staff and will include both initial in-service and advanced in-service.**

Educational Programs-Schools of Social Work

The state of Missouri collaborates with several universities in the state that have an accredited undergraduate and/or graduate school of social work, to provide either full-time or part-time

MSW education to Children's Division employees at the worker and supervisory levels, and BSW level education to senior year students preparing for employment.

Missouri statutes and regulations of the Office of Administration require the state agencies to contract with any body or entity when the amount of funds to be spent would be over \$3,000. Since the education costs per student would be over this amount, the contracting procedure is in place. Each university contributes 25% of the total amount of the contract, with the state providing the 75% with subsequent billing to Title IV-E.

The process of contracting allows the university and the state to work together to determine topics for courses that should be developed as electives for the students. The requisite courses and the electives provide a degree of preparation for the work the student is to do, upon graduation, in the case of the BSW student, and upon return to work for the MSW student/employee.

The field instructor of each university contracted to provide the BSW education experience supervises the unit of students in various local offices as they obtain their required practicum experience. This provides a link between the needs of the local Division offices and the university needs. University and agency staff comprises the panels that interview the prospective students for their ultimate employment with the Division. Panels are formed in each of the various geographic administrative parts of the state served by a specified university. Candidates must meet the requirements for employment, as would others persons within the Merit System, with the exception of not having graduated.

Annually, the BSW faculty project directors and the agency liaison staff meet to discuss successes, questions, needs for change, etc. Throughout the year, the project directors have ready access to the agency program development specialist who manages these programs. The MSW faculty project directors have ready access to the education program manager via phone and email. Meetings can be convened when needed. With both programs, communication is ongoing dealing with issues of admissions, contracts, amendments, student agreements, tracking of students in employment as well as those who have defaulted on their individual agreement.

Roundtable Discussions

Strengths Identified

- *All new front line staff and contracted case managers are provided with a competency based training program that provides the necessary knowledge and skills for entry level workers.*
- *Pro-active steps already underway to enhance the CWP Basic Training to make the curriculum more skills/practice based.*
- *Pro-active steps already underway to create a new comprehensive statewide supervisor training with both an administrative and clinical focus.*
- *Staff Training communicates openly with the policy development units, field staff and administrators to assess ongoing needs to improve training.*
- *Staff Training is responsive in the development and implementation of in-service trainings to meet specific needs of field staff.*

- *Staff Training collaborates well with other agencies, and disciplines to provide cross-training, multi-disciplinary training to meet the needs of staff and community partners.*
- *Partnership with the University of Missouri-Columbia is strong in the development and implementation of the supervisory training grant project.*
- *Strong relationship between the agency and the schools of Social Work-MSW/BSW program.*
- *Assessment of training needs is done through various ways using the CQI process, peer record review, satisfaction surveys completed by staff, and written evaluations of the specific training provided.*

Challenges Identified

- *A need for more detailed evaluation tool for staff.*
- *A need for a follow-up evaluation on staff needs.*

Recommendations for Improvement

1. *Improve the On-the-job-training structure so that it is consistent throughout the state and becomes an integral link to the overall Basic Orientation classroom training for new staff to ensure transfer of learning occurs in the field.*
2. *Continue development of a structured in-service curriculum for front line workers that will have both required and elective modules.*
3. *Continue efforts currently underway to provide a new statewide clinically based supervisor curriculum that provides required initial in-service and ongoing in-service for Children's Division supervisory staff.*
4. *Develop improved training evaluation feedback tools/process.*
5. *Create a statewide training advisory committee to assess training needs.*
6. *Explore the development and use of web based training.*

D.2. *Citing any data available to the State, discuss the effectiveness of the State's training of current and prospective foster and adoptive families and the staff of State licensed approved child care institutions that care for children in the State's care or responsibility that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties.*

Training of Current and Prospective Foster/Adoptive Families and Staff of State Licensed Approved Child Care Institutions

State legislation mandates that foster parents receive pre-service training before a foster parent home license can be issued. Prospective foster/adopt families must successfully complete an initial 27 hours of pre-service training. Prospective families who wish to go on to adopt must successfully complete an additional 12 hours of training. Licensed foster parents are then required to have 30 hours of additional training per licensing period, which is over a 2 year time frame. Missouri Children's Division trains a curriculum known as Specialized Training, Assessment, Resources, Support and Skills or "STARS". The STARS curriculum is utilized to recruit, train and mutually assess potential foster and adoptive families for children needing out-of-home care placement

The STARS curriculum is the Foster PRIDE/Adopt PRIDE curriculum which was designed as a collaborative effort of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the Child Welfare League of America, and several other states, including Missouri. The STARS curriculum promotes the premise that knowledgeable and skilled foster and adoptive parents, or resource families, are integral to providing quality family foster and adoptive care services. Resource families, like social workers, should be qualified, prepared, developed, selected, and licensed to work as members of a professional team whose goal is to protect and nurture children and strengthen families.

The STARS curriculum provides competency-based training that provides participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to work with and live with issues facing our children. The curriculum is based on five core competencies that resource families need to possess and/or develop. The competencies are:

- Protecting and nurturing children;
- Meeting children's developmental needs and addressing developmental delays;
- Supporting relationships between children and their families;
- Connecting children to safe, nurturing relationships intended to last a lifetime; and
- Working as a member of a professional team.

Foster/Adopt STARS Train the Trainer Pre-Service training

This training is designed for Children's Division staff who will be conducting the local STARS training and assessments for foster and adoptive parent applicants. It is also designed for the Foster Parents chosen by the local offices to become Teaching Foster Parents. The Adoption Specialist and the supervisor of the Children's Division Worker make up the rest of the local team needed at the STARS Pre-Service Training. The pre-service training involves nine 3 hour sessions meeting once a week for nine weeks, for a total of 27 training hours. Homework assignments known as "STARS Connections" are completed by the participants and used during the At-Home Consultation Meetings for the mutual assessment process.

Once a family has successfully completed the mutual assessment, met the five competencies, and been licensed, they are known as "Professional Foster Parents".

Family Development Plan

Upon initial licensure and re-licensure, a written family development plan is completed by the worker and foster parent as a way to mutually assess areas of need in each of the five competencies areas. It is utilized to set goals, identify tasks and establish time frames for the development of ongoing knowledge and skills in the identified areas of need. This includes the assessment of specific learning needs that can be addressed through the STARS In-Service training modules as well as local approved training resources.

Foster STARS In-Service Train the Trainer

This training is designed similar to the pre-service training. The curriculum, also developed by the Child Welfare League of America, consists of 10 training modules that provide approximately 81 hours of in-service course choices. Its purpose is to provide additional competencies and enhance existing competencies of foster parents after they have a child placed in their home. The Family Development Specialist helps the foster parent choose the modules

that will support the work of the foster parent with the child in their home. The modules are as follows:

- Module 1 The Foundation for Meeting the Developmental Needs of Children at Risk
- Module 2 Using Discipline to Protect, Nurture and Meet Developmental Needs
- Module 3 Addressing Developmental Issues Related to Sexuality
- Module 4 Responding to the Signs and Symptoms of Sexual Abuse
- Module 5 Supporting Relationships Between Children and Their Families
- Module 6 Working as a Professional Team Member
- Module 7 Promoting Children's Personal and Cultural Identity
- Module 8 Promoting Permanency Outcomes
- Module 9 Managing the Impact of Placement on Your Family
- Module 10 Understanding the Effects of Chemical Dependency on Children and families

Additional In-service Training

In-service training is available at a local level, based upon the needs of the foster parents and with approval from the local agency office. The training can be obtained through community resources such as health departments, mental health departments, hospitals, parents as teachers program, as well web based training modules for foster parents. Missouri foster parents are required to have 30 hours of training per each two year licensing period. Also, specialized training is offered via contract for Behavioral and Career foster parents.

Spaulding, Making the Commitment to Adoption, Train the Trainer

This training is the competency-based course developed by the Spaulding National Resource Center for Special Needs Adoption. The Train the Trainer course that the Division Training and Development presents is designed for the same local team that trains the pre-/in-service curriculum. The competencies of this course are based in those of the STARS training. Adoptive parent applicants who have completed the STARS pre-service training are expected to attend this course when presented by the local offices.

During SFY-03, a total of 284 participants attended the STARS Pre-service, In-service, and Spaulding Train the Trainer. Based on vendor system tracking information, a total of 980 foster parent vendors attended local STARS Pre-service training and a total of 3,186 foster parent vendors attended in-service trainings.

Specialized Training for Foster Parents

In addition to the STARS Pre-service training, Career, Behavioral, and Medical foster parents must also have additional specialized training which is provided by medical and mental health professional contracted by the Children's Division.

Kinship Training

Kinship providers must complete a training and assessment process to become licensed. Each prospective provider must complete the STARS *"For the Caregiver Who Knows the Child"* training, and demonstrate the five basic STARS competencies. The training may be completed on the provider's own time as a self-study utilizing a learning guide, or may be facilitated by a Children's Division worker in a group setting. The learning guide provides families with

information, resources and learning activities focused on meeting the individual needs of the specific child in kinship care. Licensed kinship providers must also participate in 15 additional hours of in-services training each year, just as licensed foster parents.

Based on vendor system tracking information, a total of 775 kinship vendors participated in the STARS for the Caregiver Who Knows the Child Training during SFY-03.

Evaluation and Effectiveness of Foster Parent Training

STARS and Spaulding Train the Trainer courses are evaluated through written evaluations completed by participants at the end of each week of training. Overall, written feedback and evaluation has been positive.

Local STARS and Spaulding Training of prospective foster/adoptive parents was evaluated and data was obtained through a 2002 statewide survey on the effectiveness of the training. This survey, conducted by the Foster and Adoptive Coalition in St. Louis, had 92% of the respondents trained under the STARS curriculum. 90% of foster parents were “consistently satisfied” with the initial training and 65% felt on-going training did “assist them in caring for children in foster care”. Fifty four percent reported the training helped them “work with parents”.

A written evaluation tool is provided during the STARS/Spaulding Train the Trainer and it is suggested that it be used at the local level. Consistency in its use by field staff is unknown. This is an area that needs further exploration.

Plans for Foster /Adopt Curriculum Enhancement

Currently, Children’s Division Staff Training is reviewing the revised Child Welfare League of America PRIDE foster/adopt curriculum with plans to incorporate the changes into the existing Missouri STARS Foster/Adopt Training curriculum. Implementation is scheduled for Spring 2004.

Residential Child Care Agency Requirements

The training requirements for residential care staff is located in Section 13 CSR 40-71.045 (7) A & B in the rules for Licensing Residential Child Care Agencies. This section (Part A) reflects that at least forty (40) hours of training each year is required for agency staff. Section 13 (Part B) outlines the type of acceptable training for agency staff. The agency is to document the dates, location, the subject and the name of the person (s) who conducted the training. Verification of training is conducted at the supervisory or licensing renewal meeting with the Residential Licensing Consultants.

Staff Qualification and Requirements are located in section 13 CSR 40-71.050 in the Rules for Licensing Residential Child Care Agencies. An excerpt from the Residential Rules outlines the staff qualification and requirement as:

An agency shall obtain any professional services required for the implementation of the individual service plan of a child when these services are not available from staff. Professional staff who perform casework or group work tasks, counseling with children and their families, therapeutic services, or planning of services for children and their families, shall have a master's degree in social work, psychology, counseling or a closely

related clinical field from an accredited college. Staff may have a bachelor's degree in social work, psychology, counseling or a related area of study from an accredited school if s/he is under the direct supervision of a person with a master's degree in social work, psychology, recreation and expressive therapies, counseling or a closely related clinical field.

The training requirements for child placing agency staff are located in Section 13 CSR 40-73.030 Personnel Practices and Personnel (7) in the Rules for Licensing of Child Placing Agencies. This section requires that at least twenty (20) hours of training each year for the administrator and professional staff. The agency is to document the dates, location, the subject and the name of the person (s) who conducted the training. Section E outlines the type of acceptable training for agency staff. Verification of training is conducted at the supervisory or licensing renewal meetings with the Residential Licensing Consultants.

Staff Qualification and Requirements are located in Section 13 CSR 40-73.035 in the Rules for Licensing Child Placing Agencies.

Roundtable Discussions

Strengths Identified

- *There is a competency based pre-service/in-service training curriculum for foster/adoptive parents.*
- *Specialized training is provided for career, behavioral and medical foster parents.*
- *Kinship Training is provided.*
- *There is a mechanism (family development plan) in place to assess training needs of foster parents.*

Recommendations for Improvement

1. *Improve consistency in the assessment and provision of local in-service training for foster parents.*